



# INFORMATION AND PLANNING FORUM

## *What is this meeting about???*

Community organisations such as the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre (SHNC) have to adapt to the changing political and economic environment, or face the prospect of ceasing to exist. To meet the challenges of ongoing survival, the SHNC's management committee has identified several major objectives, including the modernising of our organisation by adopting modified rules which meet the requirements of the Office of Fair Trading, and achieving PBI (public beneficiary institution) status. This will improve our ability to negotiate sponsorship and partnerships with business organisations, and will institutionalise valuable benefits im-

portant to our need to be able to attract and keep good staff.

We can achieve these goals by transitioning from the incorporated cooperative that we are now to an incorporated association, at the same time as adopting objects and rules which will meet the requirements of PBI status.

The purpose of today's forum is to explain and discuss the proposed changes, and to decide the "objects" the new SHNC Association should build into its rules.

## *Why are we proposing these changes?*

Presently, the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre (SHNC) is incorporated as a share based cooperative. Our "rules" date back to 1991, except for some minor changes, and the NSW Dept. of Fair Trading has advised us that they don't comply with present requirements. The primary reason for proposing the changes is to make our rules comply, but there are other compelling reasons as well.

For one, it is well known that the Neighbourhood Centre is partly funded by government, but that such funding does not fully cover the costs of providing services to the disadvantaged people of Surry Hills. We strive to make up the shortfall with fundraising activities such as the monthly Markets and our annual Festival, but the income generated by these activities is still not enough, and so we seek sponsorship or partnerships with willing businesses. We can make our-

selves more attractive to such businesses by attaining PBI (public beneficiary institution) status with the Australian Tax Office. We can achieve such status by ensuring that our rules meet certain guidelines, in particular that we focus our service efforts on marginalised people.

Another important benefit of PBI status is that it allows us to offer "salary sacrifice" facilities to our staff. The effect of these facilities is that our staff pay less tax for their gross income.

To achieve all these important objectives, the SHNC Management Committee has determined that the best and preferred option is to convert our legal incorporation from a share based cooperative to a membership based association. Other similar organisations have come to the same conclusion and, in fact, are providing a model for our own transition.

### *Key Dates:*

- Sat 22 October 2005—Information & Planning Forum
- Wed 7 December 2005—Annual General Meeting

### *Today's Objectives:-*

Explain the proposed changes to SHNC

Get the community's feedback

Review the SHNC's present objects and program

Discuss and determine the SHNC's new objects and program priorities

Invite everyone to the AGM on 7 December

# Present Objects of the SHNC

## Current SHNC

### Services and

### Activities

- *Advocacy, Information and Referral*
- *English Conversation Classes*
- *Multicultural Cooking*
- *Hair & Beauty Course*
- *Floristry*
- *Sewing Courses*
- *Bus Outings*
- *Blockes' Business*
- *HIV Support*
- *Mental Health Support*
- *After School Care*
- *Vacation Care*
- *Playgroup*
- *Occasional Care*
- *Hall Hire to Community Groups*
- *Monthly Surry Hills Markets*
- *Annual Surry Hills Festival*

The present objects of the SHNC as they appear in the Cooperative's rules are shown below. These objects will have to be revised so that our new Association will qualify for PBI status, but they form a basis for the discussions at this Information & Planning Forum:-

*The objects of the society shall be (a) To promote and assist the community development of Surry Hills, (Surry Hills means that area of the City of Sydney bounded by South Dowling, Cleveland, Chalmers and Elizabeth Sts, Wentworth Avenue and Oxford and Flinders Streets), through any or all of the following*

*i) Organisation or promotion of activities of a social, recreational, educational or sporting nature for the Surry Hills Community.*

*ii) Organisation, promotion or arrangement of such activities, services or facilities as will benefit the health or welfare of the Surry Hills Community.*

*iii) promotion or organisation of such activities as will enhance the physical, social or economic environment of Surry Hills.*

*iv) Assistance in the elimination of poverty, or organisation, promotion or arrangement of such activities as may be deemed charitable.*

*(b) To promote, organise, or arrange activities, services or facilities which are regional in impact but which will benefit the Surry Hills Community.*

*(c) To undertake any other activities that the board or Society believes is in the interests of the Surry Hills Community.*

**Today, we need to discuss and decide on the Objects for the SHNC, which will be built into the Rules, and will guide our service provision in years to come**



## 2 Important Requirements of Our Objects

We must emphasise services for marginalised people. (e.g. to provide a community service for the relief of poverty, suffering, disability and helplessness in Surry Hills and inner city, by directly providing services to members of the public who are aged or infirm, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, people with a mental illness, people on low incomes, or people otherwise disadvantaged within the community).

We must explicitly operate as a not-for-profit organisation, with a rule similar to "The assets and income of the association shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the association except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the association".

# Advance Notice of Annual General Meeting

All members of the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at **6:00pm on Wednesday, 7 December 2005** at Doherty Hall, corner of Norton & Collins Sts, Surry Hills.

Watch the South Sydney Herald, and the Centre noticeboards, for formal notice of the meeting.

The business of the meeting will include the normal presentation of reports and the election of a new committee, but there will be important special resolutions put to the vote at the meeting regarding changes to the rules of the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre and in particular, to transform our organisation from a share based incorporated cooperative to a membership based incorporated association.

These are very important changes for the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, designed to help us remain viable into the future, so all members are urged to consider the information contained in this newsletter and to attend the meeting to cast their vote.

Interested residents of Surry Hills who are not members are invited to become members before the AGM, and then come along and vote.

Members looking to contribute more to the community and to the SHNC are invited to nominate for the Management Committee. Nomination forms are available from the Centre, and should be submitted a week in advance of the AGM.

## Draft Special Resolutions


The Special Resolutions which will be put to the AGM will be similar to those below. The final version will be referred to in the formal notice of the AGM and will be available from the Centre, and on our website at [www.surryhillsneighbourhoodcentre.org.au](http://www.surryhillsneighbourhoodcentre.org.au) ..

Motion 1: That, in accordance with Section 316 of the *Co-operatives Act 1992*, the application for the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative to transfer to an incorporated association, is approved.

Motion 2: That the Co-operative apply to be an incorporated association under the name of the *Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre*.

Motion 3: That the Rules and Objects of the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre be adopted.

Motion 4: That if the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Co-operative is successful in transferring from an incorporated co-operative to an incorporated association, the existing share capital will be transferred to the general reserves of the organisation.



*SHNC Annual  
General Meeting,  
6:00pm on  
Wednesday 7  
December 2005.*

## Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre

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**www.  
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.org.au**

*Providing needed services to our  
community ...*

*For any information on the proposed changes to the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre's incorporation and rules, call into the Centre and talk to our coordinator, Anthony. When finalised, copies of the Special Resolutions and the complete proposed new Rules, including the Objects (as discussed at the Information & Planning Forum,) will be available from the Centre or downloadable from our website. Be sure to come to the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 7 December at 6:00pm.*